



## **EUROPEAN UNION**

### **OSCE Permanent Council No. 1352 Vienna, 27 January 2022**

#### **EU Statement on “Russia’s Ongoing Aggression against Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea”**

1. Mr Chair, European security is indivisible. Any challenge to the European security order affects the security of the EU and its Member States. In this context, the European Union condemns Russia’s continued aggressive actions and threats against Ukraine and calls on Russia to de-escalate, to abide by international law and to engage constructively in dialogue through the established international mechanisms. This was the main message of the EU Foreign Affairs Council earlier this week.
2. The core principles on which European security is built are enshrined in the UN Charter and the founding documents of the OSCE, including the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris. They include, notably, the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States; the inviolability of frontiers; refraining from the threat or use of force; and the freedom of States to choose or change their own security arrangements. These principles are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or re-interpretation. Their violation by Russia is an obstacle to a common and indivisible security space in Europe and threatens peace and stability on our continent.
3. Together with our transatlantic and like-minded partners, we have been clear that any further military aggression by Russia against Ukraine will have massive consequences and severe costs. This includes a wide array of sectoral and individual restrictive measures.
4. Dialogue in line with the key principles that underpin European security is the way to improve the security situation and to safeguard peace and stability on our continent. Such efforts should be made in good faith and not be conducted in a climate of escalating rhetoric and ultimatums. Notions of “spheres of influence” have no place

in the 21st century. We will continue to coordinate our positions and actively and substantially contribute to discussions within the existing frameworks. The OSCE is the appropriate forum to address security concerns of all interested parties. The EU welcomes the efforts of the CiO to swiftly initiate a substantial dialogue on European security.

5. We are also ready to engage in strengthening the existing mechanisms to ensure military transparency and predictability, and to support efforts regarding arms control, in particular within the OSCE framework. In this regard, we call on Russia to engage constructively.
6. Mr Chair, the Minsk Protocol, signed by the Russian Federation, is unambiguous in stating that the Trilateral Contact Group consists of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE. Russia has therefore clearly accepted its binding responsibility in the peaceful settlement of the conflict and the implementation of the Minsk agreements. We decisively reject the Russian narrative of portraying itself as a mediator of a so-called “internal Ukrainian conflict”. We urge Russia, as a party to the conflict, to engage constructively in the discussions within the Normandy format and the TCG and to implement the Minsk agreements in full.
7. We deplore the accelerated issuing of Russian passports on a massive scale to Ukrainian citizens in a simplified and selective manner in both the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula as well as in areas held by the Russia-backed armed formations. Such measures further violate the sovereignty of Ukraine, contradict the objectives of the Minsk agreements and impede the future reintegration process.
8. We deplore the increased militarisation of the Crimean peninsula, as well as further attempts to restrict freedom of navigation through the Kerch strait including to and from the Sea of Azov. We are also deeply concerned about the continued human rights violations in the peninsula where Crimean Tatars and Human Rights Defenders are particularly targeted.
9. The EU firmly supports the work of the SMM and commends it for implementing its mandate under the principles of impartiality and transparency, as enshrined in PC Decision 1117. In this regard, we deeply regret that Russia continues to undertake actions to minimize the presence of the SMM in the non-government controlled areas

of Ukraine. Recurrent hostile rhetoric against the SMM, interference with its technical assets and unprecedented restrictions to its freedom of movement by the Russia-backed armed formations are unacceptable. We urge the Russian Federation to respect the mandate given to the SMM and ensure that all restrictions affecting the SMM's work be lifted immediately.

10. The EU remains firm in its call on all sides to swiftly and fully implement the Minsk agreements and honour their commitments in full in order to achieve a sustainable political solution to the conflict in line with OSCE principles and commitments. We call on Russia to fully assume its responsibility in this regard and to use its considerable influence over the armed formations it backs to meet the Minsk commitments in full. Respect for these principles and commitments must be restored. We again call on Russia to immediately stop fuelling the conflict by providing financial and military support to the armed formations, and we remain deeply concerned about the presence of Russian military equipment and personnel in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations. The duration of the European Union's sanctions against Russia is linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.

11. The EU recalls its unwavering support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, and calls upon Russia to do likewise. We urge Russia to uphold these fundamental principles that it has itself invoked many times and to contribute, by acts and public pronouncements, to stabilising the situation and reversing moves that contravene these principles. We strongly condemn the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces since February 2014 and the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol to the Russian Federation, which we will not recognise. The European Union will remain committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC of MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.